

Views and Reviews in the World of Art



"Portrait du Marquis de Pastoret," by Ingres, in the Degas sale.

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absorbed in compositions telling some fairy tale, with a single figure, mostly a girl in an attire and a decor where medieval reminiscences are still alive. We can imagine to some extent that these subjects irritated the master in later years. They reminded him of days of darkest distress, when he painted them for a mere alms, aware that the buyers were rather attracted by their outward and accessory charm than by intrinsic merits.

These merits, in spite of the artist's bitter denial, will resist, we are sure, the depreciation which threatens a large portion of the once celebrated productions of our time. What does it matter whether he painted a girl with flowers or butterflies, or a kitchen maid? It matters how he painted it, and then the poetry is not in the subject but in the poet. No more than the painter himself do we care a bit for the wholesale "attractiveness" of a picture, but if above and beyond this we discover the rarest qualities both of sentiment and realization we shall rank that picture among the most perfect productions of all times.

One is tempted to ask with deep melancholy what would have happened if the artist at that time had found the recognition and the encouragement that he so fully deserved. Instead of this profound deceptions seem to have wrought fatal devastations in his soul. In 1877 Daniel Cottier induced Maris to come over to London, where he lived ever afterward. So far as I know there is not much left of the patterns for stained glass windows he is said to have made at that time. From that time onward it becomes more and more difficult to discern anything like chronological order among his productions; he kept them on the easel for years, repeating the same subject with brush, the pencil or the needle, and if he happened to finish any works at all they were those he had most recently started. The only clue we can follow is his progressive detachment from reality. Obviously the painter no longer worked from any substantial model, be it a landscape or figure, but only from the visions he had gathered in his mind during the first half of his life.

I shall not venture to say whether this tendency was beneficial or detrimental to his art. We have glorious examples of artists whose misfortunes and subsequent isolation had a beneficial effect and raised them to higher and higher summits. We only need to think of Rembrandt's later years. But Rembrandt dominated and chastened his grief; with Matthew Maris morbid resentments and regrets seem still to roam in the darkening shadows of his distances, and often we have the impres-

sion that the artist fell into the darkest discouragement after having strained too much the possibilities of pictorial art.

Designs by Children Shown at Museum

From the press of the Jewish Publication Society of America has recently come a book of stories, translated from the modern Hebrew writer, Judah Steinberg, and entitled "The Breakfast of the Birds," which is illustrated with astonishing success by a child. This delightful innovation in the illustrating of children's books is a telling example of the unusually good work in design done by children from 3 to 16 years of age under the instruction of Miss Deborah Kallen, who is connected with the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. These drawings and other examples showing the same naive charm and real appreciation of the principles of design may be seen in one of the class rooms of the Metropolitan Museum of Art from March 25 to April 8.

Miss Kallen in explaining her methods of teaching to a writer for the Boston Transcript said: "The teaching of art any where should lead to an interest in and understanding of art. Its purpose should be education: social and ethical. By education in art I do not mean a knowledge of facts and incidents about works of art, assorted in the order of the date of their occurrence. That would be history without art. By art education I mean training in a systematic and logical progression in the underlying principles of the technical performance of works of art. No matter what the means of expression may be such an education should give one at least a well developed reasoning power within the bounds and limitations of the principles of art."

Developing the power of reason together with experience in technical performance must lead to appreciation and aesthetic discrimination. This is the purpose of my work with children; to develop through the medium of the art of drawing and painting that sense of order which will enable them to discern and understand order in all works of art, whatever the means of expression. Children quickly realize that all human thought, whether in language, in sounds, in shapes or words, is as important as the one thought which they themselves express. Through this system of thought they learn the causes that have induced other human minds to create works of art."

Miss Kallen's instruction consists of three parts: pure design, story telling design and museum study. These she described as follows: "The children begin with the simplest and smallest form of

expression, the dot; the straight line, the straight line with an angle; the area or 'spot.' Within these lines they create examples of harmony, balance and rhythm. I follow the belief that children should first speak a language and think in it before they read it. When they have gained knowledge of these principles through the experience in performing them they are taken to the museum.

"The museum study is rather different in character and purpose from the pure design. From pure design the children learn to think and speak in terms of lines, shapes and colors, while in the museum they learn to read art. The museum is the laboratory where they gain technical knowledge. In the studies made at the museum they read and analyze 'the thoughts in lines, shapes and colors' that other human minds have thought. Thus unconsciously they are influenced by good precedents."

In the story telling design the purpose is to develop the child's natural pictorial imagination and to train his visual memory.

Another proof of the success of this method of teaching is the quality that is manifested in the drawings the children make from their own experience, where they depict the life around them. As all types of children are included in these classes the subjects are very varied from a memory scene in France to a coal line or sugar line; the settlement playground, the alley with its inevitable clothesline and the more fortunate sports, as sliding, skating and coasting.

Help for "Heroes Without a Halo"

President Wilson is to have a picture presented to him by France. It is a war canvas from the brush of the well known modern French painter J. Berne Bellecourt and is to be one of the features of the latest and newest war relief enterprise to be launched in New York, a wonderful exhibit of autographs and sentiments from the famous people of France and a collection of modern French paintings largely on war subjects, painted in many cases by artists now at the front, for the benefit of a French philanthropy that hitherto has been but little known here, La Protection du Reforme No. 2.

The exhibit will be held in the former residence of Col. and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt, opposite St. Thomas's Church, and will open within a few days. The exact date has not yet been determined upon and it is hoped to get Ambassador Jusserand to come on from Washington to open the exhibit.

"Heroes Without a Halo" is the name that M. Brioux of the Academie Francaise has given to the suffering Frenchmen that are to be benefited by this new exhibition. There are to-day 400,000 of them. They are the soldiers sent back from the front "not lucky enough to be hit," denied the solace of a badge of courage, men not wounded, but afflicted with tuberculosis, heart disease, rheumatism, neurasthenia, absolute wrecks, unable to care for their families.

The picture that is to be presented to President Wilson is a very striking war scene, showing in the foreground a soldier with his arms crossed on his gun and looking grimly into the distance, with the Prussian eagle, its feathers torn and despoiled, lying dead at his feet. Behind him a flag in tatters. In the background at the left, war is seen raging and cities are burning. To the right the sky is clear, the Bartholdi Statue of Liberty standing in New York Bay is clearly defined, with the ocean in the distance, and coming up to meet the standing soldier a vast horde of an American army headed by the American flag.

The canvases that are to be shown are

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